

accept it now. Let us do everything we can with respect to this bill and urge upon the government the necessity and urgency of moving on this suggestion. Let us get it into place so that members of the armed forces who have served on the land, in the air and on the water might be the recipients of this honour from the government and from Canadians.

● (1710)

There is a sense of urgency because at the rate we are going with respect to the Canadian armed forces, we will not have a Canadian armed force in another three or four years, in view of the enormous difficulty that seems to be arising with respect to one of our principal contributions to NATO, namely, the LRPA program. We have the Minister of Supply and Services (Mr. Goyer) saying it is not their problem, and that the \$200 million required by Lockheed must come from National Defence. National Defence says they have only \$50 million. The Minister of Supply and Services said we must make up our minds by the end of this month or there will be no LRPA; they will cancel the program and put the contract back in the drawer or else bring to an end Canada's involvement in this form of military activity with respect to continental and NATO defence.

I inject this note of urgency because, like the distinguished mover of this motion, many of us are very concerned. We are concerned that we should always give the type of recognition that is necessary for service. Service is always distinguished, and we must not lose sight of that. There is urgency because we might not have an armed force in another two or three years. Going back to the long time it took us to erect memorials in recognition of the contribution made by our armed forces personnel since the Korean war—and I will just stay with those who lost their lives at sea—let me point out that we had no difficulty accommodating merchant seamen and naval personnel who lost their lives in the First World War, in the Second World War or in action in Korea. But in the intervening years between the First and Second World Wars, and between the Second World War and the Korean war, many of our Canadian armed forces personnel died in the line of duty and it took us a long time to give recognition to the contribution of their life that these men made. We have only had it for the last two or three years in the form of an anchor at Point Pleasant park in Halifax. We should have had it 25 or 30 years ago.

I suggest to hon. members that the motion should be dealt with and the government should give consideration to it this year, not in 20 or 30 years' time. Let us do it while the men who served with distinction in the NATO forces in Europe, on the Atlantic and in the air space over the north Atlantic are with us. I think it is something we can all support. I bring into this matter a note of urgency because of the necessity of doing it now while men whom we are attempting to honour can receive with distinction and pride the type of medal or ribbon that is being suggested by the mover of the motion. We support it, and hope the government will accept the amendment which gets around the procedural difficulty and that this chamber can very quickly, in the next few minutes, advance this matter to the point where the government can recognize the motion in the hope that some time in 1976, or perhaps while our

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present governor general is still functioning and active he can present the first of these awards. We commend the mover, we support the motion, and I hope the government will utilize the next few minutes to give some indication that it is prepared to accept it and move with it.

Mr. Knowles (Winnipeg North Centre): Mr. Speaker, we are happy to give our support to this motion. We commend the hon. member for bringing it in, and even more we commend him on his success in getting it through.

Mr. Maurice A. Dionne (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of National Defence): Mr. Speaker, on behalf of my minister who is visiting Canadian troops on exercise in Norway, I am very happy to inform the House that the government accepts the principle of this motion. I want to add my personal congratulations to the hon. member for York Centre (Mr. Kaplan) for proposing the motion. I would also like to express to him our gratitude for his interest in members of the armed forces. I am also very grateful to him for the change which he made in the wording of the motion, because there are inherent difficulties in its implementation. I want to point out two or three of these difficulties and to emphasize that I am not doing this to take up time. I will not be very long.

First of all, as the hon. member himself pointed out, the proliferation of awards does tend to reduce the value of existing awards and care will have to be taken in the implementation of this motion to see that that does not happen with existing awards in the armed forces. Consideration will also have to be given to the position of our forces serving in NATO vis-à-vis the forces of other countries serving in NATO, because several years ago—I believe it was in 1968—NATO discussed the possibility of having a NATO award for forces from member countries serving with NATO. The reaction among the various nations at the time was pretty negative, so the idea was dropped. However, this will be a Canadian award for Canadian servicemen.

Another point I would like to make is that there may indeed be some sentiment in the armed forces against the implementation of additional awards, and I think it would not be a good augury for the proposed award if it should become an object of controversy among the members whom it is intended to honour. I want to stress, also, that as I see it, at least, this is an in house award, not an additional award for bravery but a service award which would be presented within the armed forces to members of the armed forces. However, on balance the government supports the purpose and intent of the motion and I recommend to the House its speedy adoption.

Mr. Forrestall: Mr. Speaker, I rise on a point of order. I wonder if the distinguished parliamentary secretary would entertain a rather brief question.

Mr. Dionne (Northumberland-Miramichi): Yes, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Forrestall: I welcome the government's attitude with respect to this bill and again extend my congratulations to the distinguished member for York Centre. In reference to this being a Canadian award to Canadian service personnel, has it been taken into consideration that